The leader Intimated that his two colleagues would pass through the fiery furnace, and afterwards anybody who liked of the male persuasion might follow them through un-harmed, but no women were permitted to go through. Then ensued a most extraordinary, and in some respects painful, spectacle. It is a doctrine of Hinduism that all the functions of Nature—fire, rain, &c.—are presided over by nature spirits. This particular sect of Hindus claims to have preserved the secret of being able to control the fire spirits, so that for the time being they are unable to burn. Whatever may be the explanation, these are the facts. Certain mystic ceremonies having been performed, and cocoa-nuts having been tossed into the flames, the two junior priests apparently became possessed. With frantic shrieks and cries they passed twice round the blazing trench, preceded by the chief priest with his sword, and followed by the brilliantly illuminated canopy. Then, still in a frenzy

painful to behold, they plunged up to their ankles in the scorching furnace and passed backwards and forwards several times, the red-hot coals and sparks scattering about their feet. The crowd followed in their wake, first

one